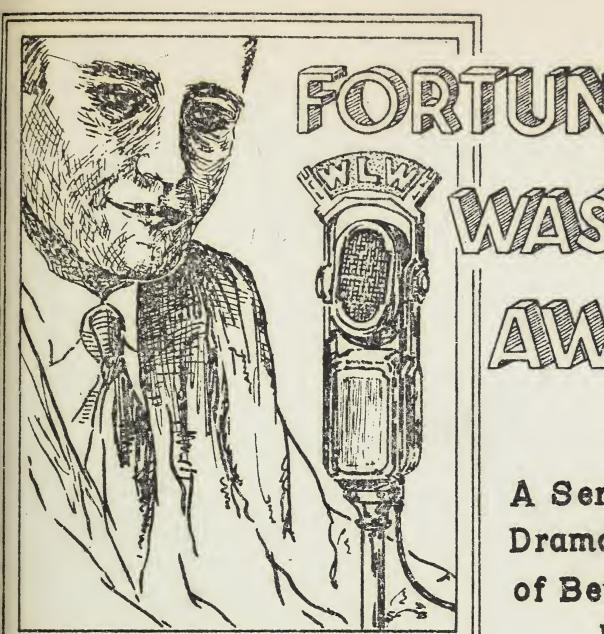
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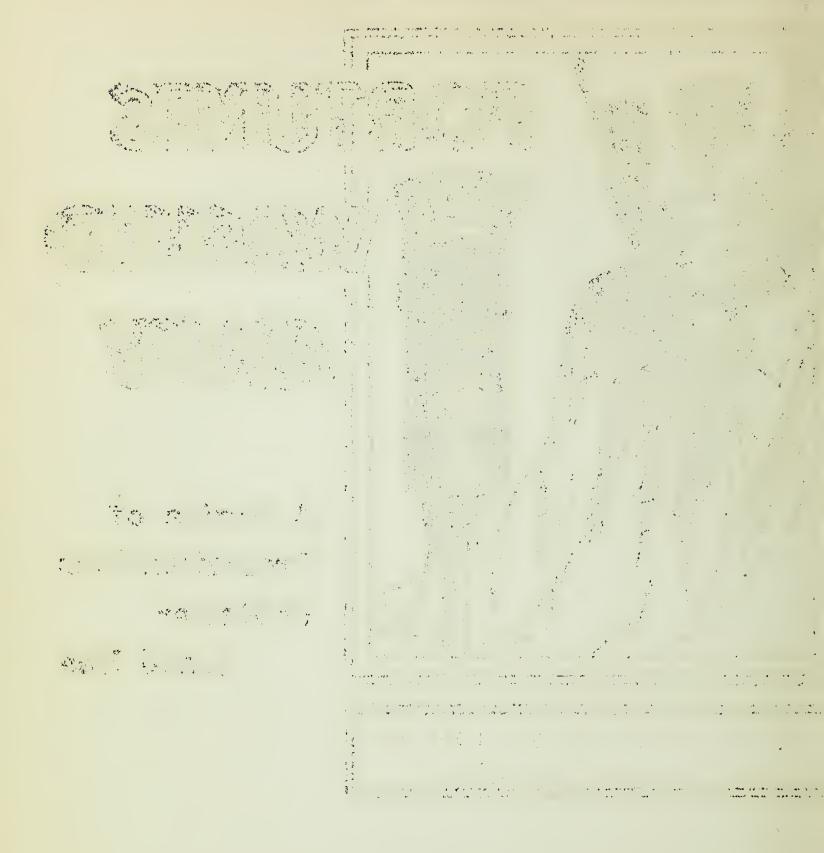


A Series of
Dramatizations
of Better
Land Use

No. 135 November 23, 1940 1:15 p.m.
"PARIS, INDIANA: GHOST TOWN"

## W.L.W CINCINNATI

United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service Dayton Ohio



A. C. Contract

#### VOICE

Under authority vested in me by the City of Paris, Indiana, I hereby sentence you, George Sage, to be hanged by the neck until dead!

ORGAN: CHORD.

#### SECOND VOICE

For the Indiana State Capital, two votes for Paris, Indiana!

## GIRL'S VOICE

CHORD.

ORGAN:

My! Isn't he handsome?

#### THIRD VOICE

Huh! Just them clothes! Everytime a dude wants to put on airs, he has his clothes made in Paris, Indiana!

#### ORGAN: CHORD.

## VOICE (filter mike)

Paris, Indiana? Yes, I remember Paris. And I remember Babylon.

I remember Pompeii, Herculaneum, Timgad, Carthage...each destroyed
in one way or another. Each..has..been..destroyed:

## SOUND: Clap of thunder ...

#### ANNOUNCER

Paris, Indiana: Ghost Town! The 135th episode of Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

#### ANNOUNCER

In the southeastern part of Indiana, in what is known as the "Grousland Purchase", is Jennings County, named for the first governor of the state. Here is a land of corn, wheat, hay, and tomatoes. Here is the beautiful Muscatatuck River, with its gorges and timbered slopes. And here is the little hamlet of Paris, about 20 houses scattered over a hill that overlooks Graham Creek, a ghost of what once was one of the largest towns in southern Indiana.

ORGAN: HORROR CHORD AND OUT.

#### ANNOUNCER (cold)

The year, 1830...Andrew Jackson was president of the United States of America. The Monroe Doctrine was history, but still defended and unchallenged. The country was moving westward, and many a citizen of North Carolina and Virginia had passed through Kentucky and into the primitive state of Indiana. Our scene is the main room of a huge wooden building near Paris. The streets are bustling with creaking carriages...but inside, a wedding is being planned.

## HIRAM

When will Marie be home, Polly?

## POLLY

Heaven only knows! My, these modern girls...always on the go.

## HIRAM

Well, she'd better get her gadding about done, because it won't be long until she's Missus William Bramwell. She's a lucky girl at that, getting a fine man like the county surveyor.

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#### POLLY

Lucky is she? He's the one who's lucky. It isn't many a girl who'll raise her own silkworms, spin her own silk, and make her own wedding dress.

#### HIRAM

I suppose you're right. I wonder if silkworms will be the coming industry for Paris.

#### POILY

Silkworms? I should say not. We have too many other industries.

A furniture factory, wagon shops, blacksmith shops, powder mill...

HIRAM

I know. A pork packing house, tin shops, and, er...a distillery where some of the, shall we say, ungracious folks, may purchase whisky for 25 cents a gallon.

## POLLY

And don't forget the cooperage! My, I'm glad that Marie isn't marrying one of those workers. You can tell a man who works for the barrel factory just by looking at him -- they're always bowlegged.

## HIRAM

And the same way you can tell a man from Paris....everytime I go to Madison people comment. They say a man from Paris can be identified by the clothes he wears.

## POLLY

Why not? They're the best clothes in Jennings County.

## HIRAM

You women...always thinking about clothes. Still...that is a pretty dress Marie made. She'll make a pretty bride, Polly.

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#### POILY

She will that.

## HIRAM

But not as pretty as you were...remember when we came to Paris?

Only there wasn't any Paris then...(fade).

## SOUND: Wind whistling thru trees...

#### HIRAM

Look, Polly. Our future home. Those trees will build it.

## POLLY

A lovely spot, Hiram. They're great trees, and, standing on the hills as they do, they seem to reach up toward heaven, and beyond.

#### HIRAM

I have never seen such trees. These must be the finest oaks that ever grew. And that giant poplar...

## POLLY

Majesty of the forest.

#### HIRAM

Yes. These trees will build our home...and a city. A great city.

And this soil will build a great nation. Do you see what I found
in the soil? Here, look.

## POLLY

An arrowhead.

## HIRAM

Yes, an arrowhead. It means much to the Indians. It may even mean their lives. But there are greater treasures in the soil, Polly. This soil is the foundation of all life. Treat it kindly, and it will reward you a hundred fold. But neglect it, and it will run away from you far faster than the fleetest deer. And when that soil runs away, the lifeblood of our nation goes with it....(fade).

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#### POLLY

That seems like only yesterday, and now, Mr. and Mrs. Hiram Foster are preparing for their daughter's wedding.

## HIRAM

Only yesterday, but those trees are disappearing. The farmers are turning to wheat and corn...and allowing their hogs to run free in the woods. That's a regrettable practice.

## POLLY

Why? They can get fat on the beech mast.

## HIRAM

Fat, in a sense...but their lard is poor, and the harm they do to the woods is tremendous. They kill the young seedlings, they trample the ground so that it washes fearfully...oh, but come, come! We're planning a wedding! It will be the greatest wedding that Paris has ever seen! And Paris, my dear, is a great city!

ORGAN: BRIEF BRIDGE.

## ANNOUNCER

The years roll by, and Paris, Indiana, grew with the years. Industries flourished. A plank road, built of oak and poplar, was laid from Paris to Madison. Mail came on horseback from Brownstow. Fields of tobacco and corn and wheat replaced the trees. But evil days fell on Paris.

## SOUND: Man whittling on wood...

## WILSON

Stop that cussed whittling, won't you?

## STEVE

What's wrong with whittling?

## WILSON

Oh, nothing, I guess. It kinda gets on my nerves.

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#### STEVE

It's good for mine.

#### WILSON

I reckon so. Everything seems to be going wrong nowadays.

## STEVE

You moan, Morgan's raid?

#### WILSON

That's one thing. Morgan and his men just helped themselves to my saddles and harness. Just ruined me. And my daughter Lillie is still mad about them running a colt through the hallway of our home.

#### STEVE

Yeah, that was bad. Awful thing that George Sage done.

#### WILSON

Wasn't it, though?

## STEVE

Killing them poor Todd children, just for a little money. Well, he paid the penalty. They hung him. Oh, well.

## WILSON

Yep, things sure are going bad. Corydon gets the state capital, even if Paris did get two votes.

## STEVE

Something worse than that going on.

## WILSON

What do you mean?

## STEVE

You remember Solon Robinson?

## WILSON

Sure...everybody in Jennings County knows him.

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## STEVE

You know how he was always hollering about farmers not taking care of the land...about not using fertilizer, about them running their rows up-and-down hill, and so on.

#### WILSON

I ought to. I've heard it often enough.

## STEVE

Seems like some folks haven't. Jennings County's going to pot.

Instead of good crops, we're getting broomsedge. Instead of green pastures, we're getting gullies. Man, farmers aren't taking care of their land. This soil is thin around here. It's fine for forests, and it's fine for pastures. But man, this land around Paris just isn't suited for row crops. And when our land goes, Paris will go.

(PRODUCTION NOTE: Start organ at high pitch, and lower it gradually through following sequence, to denote sinking prosperity).

ORGAN: TROUBLED CHORD ...

## STEVE

The land is going....

## ANNOUNCER

Paris is going...

## STEVE

The railroad missed us...

## ANNOUNCER

Paris is going...

## STEVE

They're taking out the postoffice ....

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## ANNOUNCER

Paris is going....

#### STEVE

And the land is going ...

ORGAN: UP AND INTO FUNERAL MUSIC...

#### ANNOUNCER

Thousands of acres of Jennings County land lies abandoned today.

Pastures are all too frequently only exercise grounds for livestock. Morgan's raid was a tragedy. The location of the railroad
was a tragedy to Paris. The loss of the state capital election
was a tragedy to Paris. The George Sage murder case was a tragedy.

But most of all, Paris, Indiana, suffered the tragedy of soil
erosion --- and today, Paris is a ghost town.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

## ANNOUNCER

That is the true story, of the tragic decline of Paris, Indiana, once one of the largest towns in Southern Indiana. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

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#### JONES

Thanks, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Also, our thanks to Dr. S. A. Whitsitt, of Madison, Indiana, who gave us most of the material for this story, aided and abetted by J. G. Zimmerman. And by the way, Dr. Whitsitt's great-grandfather was the Hiram Foster portrayed in the drama. Dr. Whitsitt is a pioneer in his own right, too. He's lived near Paris all of his 70-odd years, and he can recall with plenty of pride the fine timber stands that once covered the region. Also, he can tell you of the times when flocks of pigeons flow over in such quantities that they made it seem like a cloudy day. And there are other pioneers around there who can remember the days of the tall timber...Mrs. Riggs, Jim Wycoff, S. M. Fish, and Steve Withem. And they'll all agree that soil crosion has been a mighty big factor in the downfall of Paris.

## SOUND: Boom of cannon...

## ANNOUNCER

This week we saluto!

## JONES

This week we salute the farmers of Berrien County, Michigan, for their well rounded agricultural program. The Farm Security Administration has not only set a new mark in its tenant-purchase program, but it has worked out a complete soil erosion control program on its cooperating farms. The Berrien County Triple-A committee was first in Michigan to adopt the grant-in-aid program, through which farmers are able to secure lime in advance. Berrien County farmers recently organized a soil conservation district. So, a salute to Berrien County, Michigan, and its County Agricultural Agent, Harry J. Lurkins.

#### ANNOUNCER

Ewing, judging from the program, I'd say that the Berrien County farmers are determined that what happened to the farmers around Paris, Indiana, won't happen to them.

#### JONES

Right, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. They've made soil conservation their credo. And speaking of credos, that recalls what Dr. W. C. Lowdermilk has named "The Eleventh Commandment." Dr. Lowdermilk, who is Assistant Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, recently returned from a study of soil erosion in the old countries.

After what he saw, he wrote this "Eleventh Commandment."

## ANNOUNCER

Thou shall inherit the holy earth as a faithful steward, conserving its resources and productivity from generation to generation.

Thou shalt safeguard thy fields from soil erosion, thy living waters from drying up, thy forests from desolation, and protect thy hills from overgrazing by thy herds, so that thy descendants may have abundance forever. If any shall fail in this stewardship of the land thy fruitful fields shall become sterile stony ground and wasting gullies, and thy descendants shall decrease and live in poverty or be destroyed from off the face of the earth.

## JONES

Thanks, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. And next week, friends, we're going to tell you a story about Auglaize County, Ohio...about two young felks who started married life with a l4-room house and no furniture, four or five hens, a Jersey calf with a broken leg -- and plenty of determination.

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ORGANA THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

JONES (on cue)

This is Ewing Jones, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture...and goodbye until next Saturday at this same time, when once again we bring you a story of Fortunes Washed Away.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.